

**CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ**  
28TH DISTRICT OF TEXAS

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## Congress of the United States House of Representatives

April 25, 2002

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY INSTALLATIONS  
AND FACILITIES  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY READINESS  
OVERSIGHT PANEL ON TERRORISM  
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
CONGRESSIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS  
FIRST VICE CHAIR  
CHAIR, HEALTH TASK FORCE

The Honorable Ed Garza  
Mayor  
City of San Antonio  
PO Box 839966  
San Antonio, Texas 78283-3966

Dear Mayor Garza:

I write to provide you an update on a recent meeting I had in our effort to secure the proposed Department of Defense (DoD) vaccine production facility (VPF) in San Antonio. This project rightly deserves our full attention. Our Armed Forces face a critical shortage of vaccines needed to inoculate them against the biological agents they may face throughout the world. In addition, our civilian population is not prepared for a biological terrorist attack, and I am concerned that we are not doing enough to protect our citizens. We need a comprehensive vaccine strategy, including additional production capability, to meet existing and potential future biological threats.

I met recently with Dr. Anna Johnson-Winnegar, the Deputy Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Chemical/Biological Defense, who provided me with an update on the current status of the VPF effort within DoD. The DoD began its thinking on increased vaccine production needs after the Gulf War. In response to delivery problems from the private sector, the DoD began to reconsider a number of alternatives to meet its needs: (1) a government-owned, contractor-operated (GOCO) centralized vaccine production facility, (2) contracting with a sole prime contractor who would then subcontract with various vaccine manufacturers to obtain vaccines, or (3) compete out each vaccine requirement individually.

In light of the September 11 attacks, the Administration began to evaluate the need for increased vaccine production to meet not only the military population, but the general civilian population as well. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has begun to consult with DoD, and together they are attempting to decide how best to proceed. The DoD is expected to issue a report in June, 2002 detailing its long-range plan to produce and acquire vaccines for DoD personnel.

Once a decision is made, the DoD (alone or in conjunction with HHS) will issue a Request For Proposal (RFP) to begin the acquisition process, but Dr. Johnson-Winnegar indicated that it may be two to three years before the RFP is issued. The DoD will use

SAN DIEGO DISTRICT OFFICE

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SAN DIEGO, TX 78384  
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SAN ANTONIO DISTRICT OFFICE

1313 SE MILITARY DRIVE, SUITE 115  
SAN ANTONIO, TX 78214-2851  
(210) 924-7383 • (210) 927-6222 (FAX)

ROMA DISTRICT OFFICE

301 LINCOLN STREET  
ROMA, TX 78584  
(956) 847-1111 • (956) 849-3871 (FAX)

The Honorable Ed Garza  
April 25, 2002  
Page 2

competitive contracting procedures to solicit and evaluate the offers, and to select the successful offeror. Potential competitors identified to date include communities from Arkansas, Oklahoma and Maryland. The DoD has not budgeted any amounts for fiscal year 2003, and are currently considering whether to budget for the VPF in the fiscal year 2004 budget.

The DoD estimates that, over a 25-year time period, a DoD GOCO facility would cost \$386 million for facility design, \$915 million for operations and \$259 million for other costs to the government. The DoD also estimated that full-scale vaccine production would start 7 years after the start of the project.

In order for San Antonio to successfully win the VPF, I recommend -- based on my conversation with Dr. Johnson-Winegar -- that the San Antonio-area leadership assemble a team to spearhead our efforts to obtain the VPF. This team should contain members with expertise in basic and applied biomedical research; vaccine research, development and production technology and methods; vaccine production industry experience; knowledge of the regulatory and licensing requirements needed to start and operate a VPF; and VPF design and construction. San Antonio may be able to improve its competitiveness by attracting a vaccine production manufacturer to the area, and I encourage you to consider the feasibility of doing so as part of our comprehensive strategy to obtain the VPF and build our bio-technology industry.

I'll continue my efforts to provide you with the latest information on the VPF and support our efforts any way I can. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about this important project for San Antonio.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ciro D. Rodriguez" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ciro D. Rodriguez  
Member of Congress

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FIRST VICE CHAIR  
CHAIR, HEALTH TASK FORCE

The Honorable Nelson W. Wolff  
County Judge  
Bexar County  
100 Dolorosa  
San Antonio, Texas 78205-3002

Dear Judge Wolf:

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